



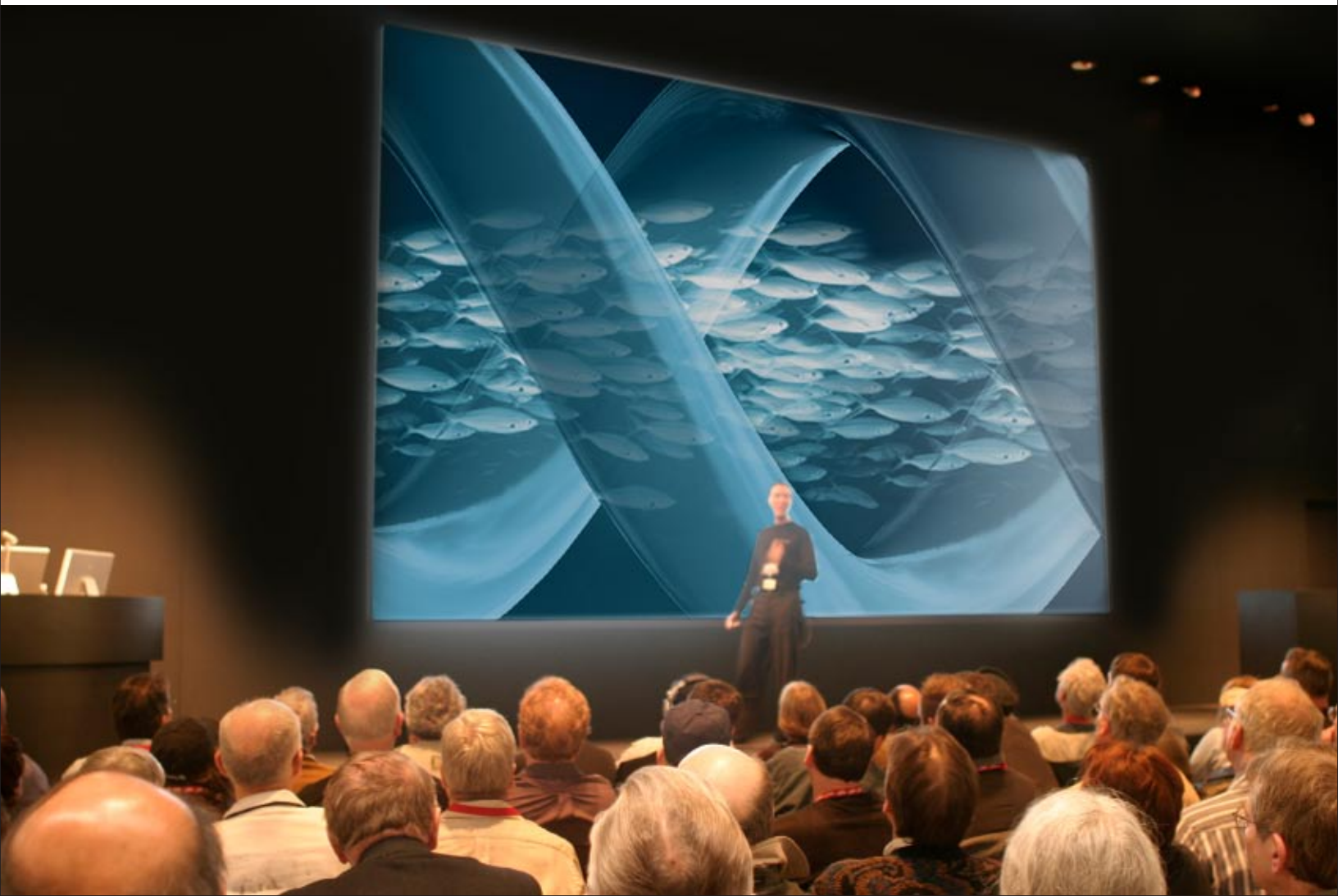
**PRINCIPLE DYNAMICS
CONSULTING INC.**
RESULTS THROUGH INTEGRITY

Leadership Conversations

Part 1: The Key to Winning the Hearts and Minds of Our Employees

» *Written by Douglas Ross in conversation with Bill Shaw*

My conversations with people are the key to leadership. Every conversation offers an opportunity to further both the individual development and the organization direction. Conversation occurs naturally with individuals and within groups. In order to make the conversations effective, I spent time with the person to listen to what they are saying in order to build a relationship based in trust.



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As Steven Covey points out, it is important to seek first to understand the individual, his context and the organization, and then be understood. Below are some of my thoughts and techniques that I feel are important for leaders within the organization.

1. Listen

Their Perception is Your Reality:

People have preconceived notions of what they think is happening in the world. They filter events and people through these notions. These notions then operate as assumptions from which they draw conclusions and take action. When I enter into a conversation with people, I understand that their actions are based on their perception. To deal with their actions, I then need to understand their reality. Thus, their perception becomes my reality during any conversation.

Listen For the Truth People Tell Themselves:

To understand their reality, I need to ask questions. When I ask questions, I am usually trying to discern what people say to themselves at a personal level. In my opinion, people have a deep inner dialogue that for the most part is private and unspeakable. Sometimes they are not even aware of this dialogue themselves. When I have a conversation with them, I listen for this dialogue. In order for me to deal with their reality, I need to know the truth of what they are telling themselves I hear the spoken topic of concern and I probe to determine what they are dealing with at an inner level.

For example, a person approaches me about a suggestion for excellence idea that he or she has. The conversation is about

the idea. The deeper conversation is about how this person approaches the realization of his or her idea, i.e.:

- How does he determine if it is a good idea?
- Does he have a plan for implementation?
- Does he feel comfortable enough with others to involve them in the idea?
- Does he understand the idea for excellence system we have in place?

The answers to these questions tell me how that person approaches their work, and about their relationships with others. I also learn what their level of involvement is with the business. This is the inner dialogue they have with themselves.

2. Build Relationships

Building a relationship with employees takes time. Here are some ideas for conversations.

Know the Vision:

There is constant pressure to return to where we have been. A leader needs to keep pushing. Don't set the sights too short, never sell yourself or the organization short, and don't ask for something we don't need.

Know Yourself:

There are many opportunities for leadership in an organization. Some people let their egos become a filter of reality. Although they see what needs to be done, they often assume that they are responsible for doing it. So they tell others what to do. Sometimes this is acceptable while other times it is not. Each situation presents an opportunity for leadership. A leader needs to be able to recognize the opportunity and to deal with it. A leader needs to be honest with him/herself when undertaking these opportunities – it can't be a rationalization.

Know the Others:

As a leader, I need to discern a number of background relationships that impact my employees. For example:

- What are the constraints under which they are operating?
- What resources do they have?
- What equipment and organizational limitations are they working with?

Once I understand the background, then I can inquire where I can be of assistance. If they trust me, then together we can proceed to solve the problems that they and the organization are facing.

3. Perceptions

When I hear about so-called problematic employees, I worry how our organization can be so misaligned. People in this organization are bright and underutilized. They have a pent up demand for leadership. We need to utilize these talents better.

I think that people develop and carry perception about other people. These perceptions are categorized as either positive or negative or neutral. The perceptions are then spread to others to satisfy some intentions. For example, a person may perceive someone as a troublemaker because they pointed out an error in public in my well laid plans. This person feels hurt and justified in telling other people that the offending person was a troublemaker. They and others then form an impression of the offending person as a troublemaker and they interpret all his actions in that light. Sometimes they may even be part of

the spreading process and in the end; a person may be unfairly labeled.

This way of thinking is based on the belief that individuals are the focal point of the organization. We loose sight of fact that individuals are representative of segments of the organization. In this way of thinking, a person who is abusive in a meeting may represent the alienated portion of the organization, while the quiet ones may represent people who have given up. In this possible scenario, the abusive person could be alienated but still caring about organization performance, while the quiet person could also be alienated but non-caring about organizational performance. We could misread these people and incorrectly label them.

4. Lead People

Build Commitment:

All people have fundamental commitments. I seek to discern where their commitments are. If they have a commitment to the job and are on road to integrity with themselves, I can support where they need support. If they have a commitment to themselves and their own personal gain, then my conversation purpose changes. I believe that in their heart, people understand where their commitments are. As a leader, it is my responsibility to validate, re-enforce or change commitments.

Inspire People:

People are motivated by positive experiences that energize them. I seek to build on this inner motivation and goodness by providing opportunities for them to experience success. People will react to negative reinforcing, but it doesn't motivate them to continue this activity long term.

Integrity:

People hear the words and see the actions. If there is a difference, they recognize it. A leader will then miss opportunities for improvement.

Build Alignment:

A leader needs a firm foundation. Once he has committed to action, he must be assured that these actions are moving the business in the right direction and are in line with people's needs. Alignment occurs when people support the direction with actions.

Tell The Truth:

I expect people to use empathy when telling the truth to another. I don't mask it, neither do I avoid it. If I am misquoted, instead of saying "you are wrong", I might apologize for giving them the impression that I said something that bothered them. I then proceed to convey what I really meant and check for understanding.

Take Your Time:

I don't expect people to be truthful the first time that I meet with them. It takes time to build relationships with people. I expect guarded responses and I build these responses into achievable, agreed upon targets.

Build on Success:

I believe people know how they are doing at work. I seek to understand where they perceive their work to be value added. I also seek to understand their level of self-discipline to keep themselves focused on their own performance. I ask questions and use their answers as I try to ascertain the best path for the person. I believe that people learn best by experiencing

the feeling of success and I try to help them establish the area where they best add value.

Validate and Correct Actions

Sometimes a person provides me with false information from which I formulate a path of action. The next time that I have a conversation with this person, I seek to understand what went wrong. When I realize that I was dealing with false information, then I proceed to probe for the truth and establish a path that brings the success that we all can build on.

5. Learn From Other Points of View

I have learned more from people who disagree and who speak out. When an hourly person represents himself, I first seek to determine whether he is representing himself or a multitude of people. I as a leader, only see glimpses. The people see things as they are.

Regardless of what other people think or what I heard, I assume that when I meet with people that they are good and that they come here to contribute. If this is not true, it doesn't matter. Every person is a valuable resource toward attaining our goals. Watch and believe in the positive and the success of individuals. People will develop. The bottom 1% who are legitimately here to do a bad job will do so regardless.

Every decision I make will not benefit everyone. If we are consistently satisfying the majority of people, and not always the same majority, ultimately our decisions will support the general population. I don't satisfy everyone all the time. I look for win situations.

6. Involve People in the Business

We as an organization have not figured out how to use the good in people and to minimize the bad. I approach this challenge by educating people and by providing positive outcomes for their work assignments.

When I expose them to the business, they understand what it is that the organization needs to accomplish. They then can determine where they can contribute to the organization. Once they understand where they can contribute, they need to know what they can control and how decisions are made that affect their span of control. They then begin to understand what has been done in the past, what others do, and why they do it. This

then leads to respect for the positive aspects of the organization. This then motivates people to add more to an organization that they can respect.

When I can, I also provide outcomes for that person through specific work assignments or special projects. This will then provide a base for conversations about any negative outcomes that the person is projecting.

I am never afraid to be a friend to anyone at work. I can separate friendship from business. If it impacts me in my day-to-day duties, I make agreements up front. I never compromise my morals. Friendship is based on values. If you believe that a person should never be undermined, then you need to live up to it. Always focus on success.

A company specific lean manufacturing system when utilized gives us the chance to compete on an equal playing field. It drives out waste, improves throughput and quality while driving waste down. It only makes sense to adopt it as quickly as possible.

7. The Power of Diversity

It is not only the person who is misaligned, but also the people who see him or her as misaligned. We have many reinforced behaviors that are counterproductive and contribute to the misalignment. Organizationally, we do dumb things that also contribute. Unfortunately, people will shorten their perspective to see the misalignment as a personal problem as opposed to being an organizational challenge.

If people then only surround themselves with others like themselves, then they will only get themselves. We need other scales. Through these scales we gain an understanding of the value of diversity. Once we understand it, then we can experience the power of diversity. This diversity not only includes the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, but the power of personality diversity.

At the management level, I need to work with others who see the person as misaligned so that they may become open to insights that may come out of working with this individual.

I have demanded things that they have the inclination of. This eats away at the perceptions that people carry within the organization. As the perception fades, the real person becomes clearer and clearer. Then I zoom for positive reinforcing behavior.



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PDCI Value Proposition - providing knowledge and guidance on cultural transformation processes to organizations struggling with the demands of implementing projects that involve significant procedural and process change.

PDCI Vision - aspiring to be amongst the world leaders in cultural transformation by developing and earning a reputation as a consulting firm that focuses and delivers on a "Results through Integrity" process.

PDCI Mission - guiding leadership teams and their executives on achieving cultural transformation through personal and organizational integrity and then facilitate the implementation of performance strategies and tactics.